

ABSTRACT

RESEARCH TITLE: The Relationship Between Socioeconomic Status and Obesity Among Rural Adolescents

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The prevalence and severity of adolescent obesity in the United States has been documented, along with some potential factors that influence this epidemic. Race and socioeconomic status are factors that have been found to play a role in obesity-related behaviors, especially among urban populations. The purpose of this study was to explore the relationships among socioeconomic status, environment, and obesity.

Participants were 263 seventh, eighth, and ninth-grade students from a small school in rural east central Indiana. They completed a survey, consisting of demographic information, body mass index (BMI), socioeconomic status (SES), and the environment. The mean and standard deviation were found for BMI, SES Score, and Environment Score.

Nearly 51% of the sample surveyed was overweight or obese. The prevalence of overweight or obesity was seen throughout the entire group, not just within a certain SES group or environment group (i.e. in-town students vs. rural students). A Pearson's correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between SES and obesity and the relationship between the

environment and obesity. There was no significant correlation between SES and obesity or between obesity and the environment.

The high prevalence of overweight and obese adolescents among this sample group indicates the need for appropriate interventions to reduce obesity.